

TEACHING COMPETENCY AMONG POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

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This project report is dedicated to my beloved father, mother and husband
whose loving spirit lives on in these pages.

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to study the teaching competency and the most dominant characteristics among postgraduate students in Faculty of Education at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. The sample comprised of 309 teachers working in different secondary / primary school in Johor Bahru. The competency was determined through their views using a questionnaire on teaching skills, concern for school, concern for students and concern for self. Thus, developing a comprehensive and practical model of teachers' competence characteristics. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 11.5 software. The result showed that, all teachers are competent teachers. There are significant relationship between teaching competency and gender, specializations, and; academic achievement. In respect to the outcome of the research, there were some relevant suggestions being put forth and carried out.

ABSTRAK

Terdapat dua maksud kecekapan; pertama, ia merujuk kepada pengeluaran atau hasil latihan yang ditarifkan sebagai kecekapan pencapaian. Maksud yang kedua merujuk kepada input, atau menerangkan kualiti yang diperlukan oleh manusia untuk mencapai kecekapan pencapaian. Kajian ini bertujuan mengenalpasti tahap kecekapan guru yang juga merupakan pelajar siswazah di Fakulti Pendidikan, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. Seramai 309 orang responden yang terdiri daripada guru di sekolah menengah dan juga sekolah rendah di negeri Johor. Kecekapan ini dikenalpasti menerusi pandangan mereka terhadap kemahiran mengajar, kecekapan, ciri-ciri profesional guru and pengurusan dalam kelas dengan tujuan membangunkan satu model kecekapan guru yang pratikal dan menyeluruh. Terdapat unsur yang akan digunakan untuk menyediakan guru mencapai tahap kecekapan dan professional yang lebih tinggi kerana pekerjaan mengajar menuntut penetapan dan bimbingan dalam alam persaingan pengajaran pada hari ini.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
	Thesis Status Certification	
	Supervisor Certification	
	Title Page	i
	Declaration	ii
	Dedication	iii
	Acknowledgement	iv
	Abstract	v
	Abstrak	vi
	Table of Contents	vii
	List of Figures	xii
	List of Tables	xiii
	List of Symbols / Short Form	xvi
	List of Appendices	xvii

I INTRODUCTION

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Background of Study	3
1.3	Problem Statement	6
1.4	Objectives	7
1.5	Research Questions	7
1.6	Theoretical Framework of the Study	8

1.7	Conceptual Framework of the Study	10
1.8	Importance of the Study	12
1.9	Scope & Limitations of Study	13
1.10	Definition and Concept	14
1.10.1	Competency	14
1.10.2	Teaching Competency	14
1.10.3	Competency Test	15
1.10.4	Effective Teaching	16
1.10.5	Profession	16
1.10.6	Subject knowledge	17
1.10.7	Teaching Prowess	17
1.10.8	Updating Knowledge	17
1.10.9	Collegiality	18
1.10.10	Commitment	18
1.10.11	Teacher Student Relationship	18
1.10.12	Empowerment	18
1.10.13	Self-development	19
1.10.14	Remuneration	19
1.10.15	Ethical Code of Conduct	19

II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	20
2.2	Research on Meanings of Competency	22
2.3	Research on Educators' Professional Characteristics	26
2.4	Research on Quality in Initial Teacher Education	27
2.4.1	The Model of the Teacher	27

2.5	Research on Assessing Competency of Teacher	29
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III METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	32
3.2	Design of Study	32
3.3	Population	33
3.4	Sample	33
3.5	Place and Time of Study	34
3.6	Instrumentation	34
3.7	Pilot Study	39
3.8	Procedure	40
3.9	Data Analysis	41
3.10	Research Calendar	44

IV RESULTS

4.1	Introduction	45
4.2	Demographic Data Analyses	46
4.2.1	Gender of Respondent	46
4.2.2	Age of Respondent	46
4.2.3	Distributions of Respondents' Ethnic	47
4.2.4	Distributions of Respondent's Academic Qualification and Program of Study	48
4.3	Academic Achievement of Respondents	49
4.4	Level of Teaching Competency Among	

	Postgraduate Students In Faculty of Education at UTM	50
4.4.1	Skills Scales	51
4.4.2	Concern for School Scales	52
4.4.3	Concern for Student Scales	53
4.4.4	Concern for Self Scales	53
4.5	Relationship between Teaching Competency and Gender	54
4.6	Relationship between Teaching Competency and Ethnic	55
4.7	Relationship between Teaching Competency and Teaching Experience	56
4.8	Relationship between Teaching Competency and Academic Qualification	57
4.9	Relationship between Teaching Competency and Program of Study	59
4.10	Relationship between Teaching Competency and CGPA	62
4.10.1	Relationship between Skills Scales and CGPA	62
4.10.2	Relationship between Concern for School Scales and CGPA	63
4.10.3	Relationship between Concern for Student Scales and CGPA	64
4.10.4	Relationship between Concern for Self Scales and CGPA	65
4.10.5	Relationship between Four Combined Competency Scales (Overall Competency Scales) and CGPA	65

5.1	Introduction	66
5.2	The Level of Teaching Competency and its Dominant Dimensions (Skills, Concern for School, Concern for Students and Concer for Self) among Postgraduate Students at UTM	67
5.3	The Relationship between Teaching Competency and Teachers' Background That is Gender, Ethnic, Teaching Experiences, Academic Qualifications and Specializations among the Postgraduate Students at UTM	68
5.4	The Relationship between Teaching Competency and Academic Performance Among Postgraduate Students at UTM	69
5.5	Practical Implication	70
5.6.1	Suggestions to Executives Committees of UTM	70
5.6.2	Suggestions to the Ministry of Education	71
5.6.3	Suggestions to Teachers	72
5.6	Recommendation for Future Research	73
5.7	Conclusion	73

REFERENCES	75
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APPENDICES	81
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LIST OF FIGURES

NO. TABLE	TITLE	PAGE
1.1	Conceptual Framework of the Study	11

LIST OF TABLES

NO. TABLE	TITLE	PAGE
3.1	Discipline of PHD and Master Degree programmes in Faculty of Education and 2008 Enrollment	33
3.2	Teacher' Competency Scales and Items Related to Competence Characteristics of a Teacher	36
3.3	Likert Scales	39
3.4	The Distribution and Collection of Questionnaires for Courses Involved	41
3.5	Teachers' Perception Level of Teachers' Competence	42
3.6	Description of Statistical Tests of the Study	43
3.7	Research Calendar	44
4.1	Distributions of Respondents' Gender (N=309)	46
4.2	Distributions of Respondents' Age (N=309)	47
4.3	Distributions of Respondents' Ethnic (N=309)	47
4.4	Distributions of Respondent's Academic Qualification and Program of Study (N=309)	48
4.5	The Mean of Academic Achievement (N=309)	49
4.6	Perception Level of Academic Achievement	50
4.7	Frequencies for Level of Academic Achievement of Respondents (N=309)	50
4.8	Perception Level of Teachers' Competence	51
4.9	The Means of Scales in Teaching Competence	

	Among the Respondents (N=309)	50
4.10	The Mean of Skills Scales Among the Respondents (N=309)	52
4.11	The Mean of Concern for School Scales Among the Respondents (N=309)	52
4.12	The Mean for Concern for Student Scales Among the Respondents (N=309)	53
4.13	The Mean of Concern for Self Scale among the Respondents (N=309)	54
4.14	Independent-Samples <i>t</i> -test of Competency Scales and Gender Among the Respondents (N=309)	55
4.15	Testing on Competency Scales and Ethnic Among the Respondents Using ANOVA (N=309)	56
4.16	Person Correlation Analysis Between Competency Scales and Teaching Experience Among the Respondents (N=309)	57
4.17	Independent-Samples T-test for Competency Scales and Academic Qualification Among the Respondents (N=309)	58
4.18	The Means for Competency Scales and Program of Study Among the Respondents (N=309)	61
4.19	Pearson Correlation Analysis Between Skills Scales and CGPA Among the Respondents (N=309)	63
4.20	Pearson Correlation Analysis Between Concern for School Scales and CGPA Among the Respondents (N=309)	63
4.21	Pearson Correlation Analysis Between	

	Concern for Student Scales and CGPA Among the Respondents (N=309)	64
4.22	Pearson Correlation Analysis Between Concern for Self Scales and CGPA Among the Respondents (N=309)	65
4.23	Pearson Correlation Analysis Between Overall Competency Scales and CGPA Among the Respondents (N=309)	65

LIST OF SYMBOLS / SHORT FORMS

\leq	-	Less or Same As
%	-	Percentage
CGPA	-	Cumulative Grade Point Average
PHD	-	Doctor of Philosophy
N	-	Number
Sig.	-	Significant
Std D.	-	Standard Deviation

LIST OF APPENDIES

APPENDIX	TITLE	PAGE
A	Questionnaires Part I : Background of Respondent and Academic Achievement Part II: Questions Trait Teacher's Competence	81

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Teaching is an important and professional job in educating million of students; strengthen human capital of a country which will then leading to the changes and the development of a country. Professional work involves highly complex sets of skills, intellectual functioning and knowledge that are not easily acquired and not widely held. For this reason, professions are often referred to as the “knowledge-based” occupations (Hodsonc and Sullivan, 1995). Teaching requires competence and standards that would encompass the principles and guidelines to be accepted world wide, which seem to draw very little interest. Due to the reason mentioned, identifying the characteristics and effectiveness of teacher will be focus in the study of competence testing for teachers.

Competence has been used for the evaluation of teachers at three different stages: student-teachers, beginning teachers and experienced teachers. These evaluations are conducted by different parties, including teacher educators, researchers and the government. As the public demand for accountability increases, schools of education are forced to identify the qualities of effective teachers and

planned curricula to ensure that prospective teachers demonstrate those qualities prior to certification (Taylor, Middleton III and Napier, 1990).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in Washington, is one body which leading the way in making teaching a profession that is dedicated to student learning, while upholding high standards for professional performance. It has raised the standards for teachers, strengthened their educational preparation and created performance-based assessments that demonstrate accomplished application of the standards. This clearly emphasizes the need for preparation of educators for high standards of professional achievements.

A number of studies have concentrated on various aspects of the teaching profession (Lusch and O'Brien, 1997; Shestack, 1998) identifying the functions of a teacher (Munoz et al., 2000; Phelps, 2006) or focused on the effective ways of teaching (Analoui, 1995) and studied the changing nature of teacher's professionalism (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2000).

The need for developing and attaining standards or competence has increased for all teachers in today competitive teaching environment. The standards and competence of teachers create a professional and effective environment of "best teaching" practice. They enable school to confidently create systems, policies and procedures to maintain and ensure high operational quality that leads to exceptional records and management performance.

Recent development in education, such as increased budgetary freedom of schools, more demanding and active parents or students, governmental policy with respect to accountability and accreditation, the development and implementation of standards of teaching/education and publication of rating of school performance in newspapers and on the Internet, force schools to provide more and more information on their educational quality and their effort they uphold. It presenting

that the major role in the quality of a school and learning of its students is played by teachers.

1.2 Background of Study

Teaching competency is a set of abilities, knowledge and belief which a teacher possesses and also uses for an effective teaching and learning process. In other words, competency is the possession of sufficient skills and understanding to do certain kind of work satisfactorily. Teaching competency refers to cognitive knowledge of the teacher, which entails effects on student learning. In the educational context, a competency test means a test developed for the purpose of assessing knowledge, skills, value and attitudes of the students and/or teachers. According to Page (1978), a competency test is designed to assess which particular skill has been learned and practiced.

Generally, there are many factors that determine the competency of teacher. Education programme may consider as one of the factor determine the competence and profession of teachers. Yager (1993) suggested that teacher education programmes should be “based upon objectives, generally expressed in performance terms that delineate a variety of instructional skills and competence”. Taylor, Middleton and Hlapier (1990) also advocated that the major thrust of teacher education programmes is to maximize the professional competence of teachers. The identification and determination of teacher competence are thus crucial in teacher education and development. First, teacher certification groups are using competence as an indicator. Secondly, teacher education institutes are planning their programmes which aim to maximize teacher competence. Thirdly, teacher educators are using teacher competence to reflect various stages of teacher development.

As proposed by Mahathir (1997), Vision 2020 calls for sustained, productivity-driven growth, which will be achievable only with a technologically literate, critically thinking work force prepared to participate fully in the global economy of the 21st century. In line with and in support of the nation's drive to fulfill the vision, tertiary education system should foster the development of human capital in preparing to meet the challenges of the coming century (in *The Malaysian smart school: A Conceptual Blueprint*, 1997); and teachers are playing significant roles in educating and shaping students to look forward the challenges.

Further more, according to National Education Blueprint (PIPP) 2006 – 2010 which presented by Ministry of Education, completely outline its focus, main strategies and working plans to influential our national education to be applicable and always fulfill the needs of society in the future. It sounds to preparing an education system which is with international standard, effective and efficient. Development of education is concerning on inflection, equity, quality and effectiveness in education. There are six strategies in PIPP; the fifth strategy which stated to fortify professionalism of teachers with more chary and systematic in selecting new teachers, posting teachers and providing teacher's welfare was highlighted along for this study.

Along with this strategic, it present that teaching is an important and professional job in educating million of students; strengthen human capital of a country which will then leading to the changes and the development of a country as mentioned before. Teaching profession work involves complex sets of skills, intellectual functioning and knowledge; thus, teaching requires competence and standards that would encompass the principles and guidelines to be effective, practical and accepted world wide.

Recently, the demand of competence and effective teachers in a development country such as Malaysia is important to lead the improvement to meet the global requirement and rivalry. Though teachers are certified, beginning

teachers rarely attain the competence of effective teachers. Teachers will continue to develop their competence throughout their professional lives. Researchers are particularly interested in the comparison of the competence of the novice and the experienced teachers. This is the situation which Reynolds (1992) has tried to describe as “competent teaching along a continuous of experience”. Though there is much concern for the determination of competence of teachers, there is little consensus among educators or teachers on their own practical definition. This is understandable as fundamental questions like “what is good teaching?”, “what constitutes teacher effectiveness?” are hard to define (Brophy, Good and Lanier, 1986) due to the complex nature of teaching as a profession. Meanwhile, how far is the teacher in Malaysia practice their competence, effective and characteristics in teaching and learning progress?

This study is aimed in attaining goal to identify an effective practice and formulate guidelines of the teacher’s competence and characteristics among both novice and the experienced teachers in Malaysia. The view form teachers on term of competence, the good or effective teacher and skills also postulate an important issue to be concentrated in the study. This competence (to develop knowledge, skills and attitude) will enhance and facilitate future teaching competence, as well as can be transferred to other learning institutions.

According to “quality in initial teacher education” which present by David Blake and Jenny Lansdell (2000), the model acknowledges that teaching is an intellectually rigorous activity. The programme is underpinned by a philosophy which emphasizes the need for sound subject knowledge, an understanding of how student learn, effective pedagogy and constant questioning and reflection. It stresses the need for flexible and adaptable teachers to meet the manifold and complex demands of education in the twenty-first century. Student teachers will be encouraged to develop intellectual skills which will enable them to become better informed, to be more active in their own learning, to challenge, analyze and synthesize rather than describe, to initiate and manage change in both classroom

and school. Teacher professionalism should not be narrowly interpreted, but should include such qualities as creativity, commitment, enthusiasm and intellectual liveliness - all of which have the power to energize teaching and galvanize learning. Thus, this study will investigate the most dominant dimension of teachers' competence among postgraduate students in Faculty of Education, using teacher performance appraisal checklist. Further more, this research will look into the relationship between teachers' competence and their class academic achievement among the target group.

There are number of studies have concentrated on various aspects of the teaching profession (Lusch and O'Brien, 1997; Shestack, 1998) and in identifying the functions ways of teaching (Analoui, 1995) and studied the changing nature of teacher's professionalism (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2000). But no study has identified the profound professional characteristics and competence of a teacher and presented it in a comprehensive model. Therefore, this study will factories the competence, effectiveness, skills and treats in practically with aim develop a comprehensive model of professional and competence characteristics of a teacher that will prepare them for higher standards of competence achievements, as all teaching professions demand standardization and formulation of guidelines in today's competitive environment. The findings and model that emerge can be applied across different schools and education institutions.

1.3 Problem Statement

This study is aimed at investigating the level of teaching competency among school teachers on their teaching skills, effectiveness, professional characteristics and classroom management.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the study are to investigate:

- i. The teaching competency among postgraduate students in Faculty of Education at UTM.
- ii. The dominant characteristics of teaching competency among postgraduate students in Faculty of Education at UTM.
- iii. The relationship between teaching competency and academic achievement among the postgraduate students in Faculty of Education at UTM.
- iv. The relationship between teaching competency and teachers' demographic background such as gender, ethnics, teaching experiences, academic qualifications and specializations among the postgraduate students in Faculty of Education at UTM.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions for the study include:

- i. What is the level of teaching competency among postgraduate students in Faculty of Education?
- ii. What are the most dominant characteristics of teaching competency?
- iii. Are there significant relationship between teachers' competence and their academic achievement among the postgraduate students of Faculty of Education?
- iv. What are the terms and perceptions from their view as postgraduate students about teachers' competence, profession, effectiveness, skills and treats based on demographic background?

1.6 Theoretical Framework of the Study

Theoretically, definitions of competencies serve as the job behaviors people need to display in order to do a job effectively. Woodruffe (1993) asserts that there is a basic distinction between “aspects of the job at which person is competent and aspects of the person which enable them to be competent”. “Aspects of a person” are referring to their knowledge or skills that “enable them to be competent”.

The Ontario College of Teachers (1999) has developed standards of practice for the teaching profession organized around the following five themes: commitment to students and student learning; professional knowledge; teaching practice; leadership and community; and ongoing professional learning (Auger and Wideman, 2000).

In Krishnaveni and Anita (2007), the education profession serves complex goods that are concerned with the development of the student and the future of the society. An educator ought to possess certain characteristics so that he/she is professional in his/her occupation. Thus, there is a theoretical model of educators’ professional characteristics was presented which consists of skill, concern for others and concern for self.

The three factors, “Subject Knowledge”, “Teaching Prowess” and “Continued Education” are classified as skill as these characteristics contribute in enhancing one’s professional competence, which is mainly teaching. This sphere, skill talks about the content knowledge that the educator possesses, his/her ability to transfer this knowledge to the learners through his/her expertise, the pedagogy he/she uses and the communication skills that he/she possess and finally about the need for life long learning for a professional which encompasses updating of content knowledge and action research which updates him/her with the student feedback.

The second sphere consists of the factors: “collegiality”, “commitment” and “teacher” (student relationship). Termed as “Concern for others”, it focuses on his/her characteristics that mainly relate to the people he/she connects or associates with, directly or indirectly. The first factor deals with his/her relationship with peers, whereas the second factor, commitment is concerned with his/her responsibility towards their profession, students, parents, colleagues, management and the institution that employed them. The third factor concerns the relationship with the students with whom his/her major interactions occur. Apart from the teaching aspect, the other relationships like mentoring and respecting the students’ feelings are included in this factor.

The third sphere, “Concern for self” consists of empowerment, self-development and remuneration. These are grouped under “self” as each one of these aspects contributes to the growth of the educator as an individual. Empowerment deals with the autonomy he/she exercises with discretion, power and control. Self-development is related to his/her growth aspect in personal and professional life. Career growth, leadership prospects and self-organization are considered here. Remuneration in terms of monetary reward and recognition factors do have an impact on growth and retention and are identified as vital elements of a profession.

1.7 Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study is mainly investigating the competency of teachers amongst postgraduate students in Faculty of Education, UTM. Figure 1.1 below will better illustrate the conceptual framework of the study. According to the figure 1.1, the

competence characteristics of a teacher are dividing into four scales. They are testing on skills, concern for school, concern for student and concern for self.

Skills scales have seven sub-scales which consist scales on subject knowledge, teaching prowess, classroom management, updating knowledge, instructional planning, teaching effectiveness and; teaching and learning's progress evaluation.

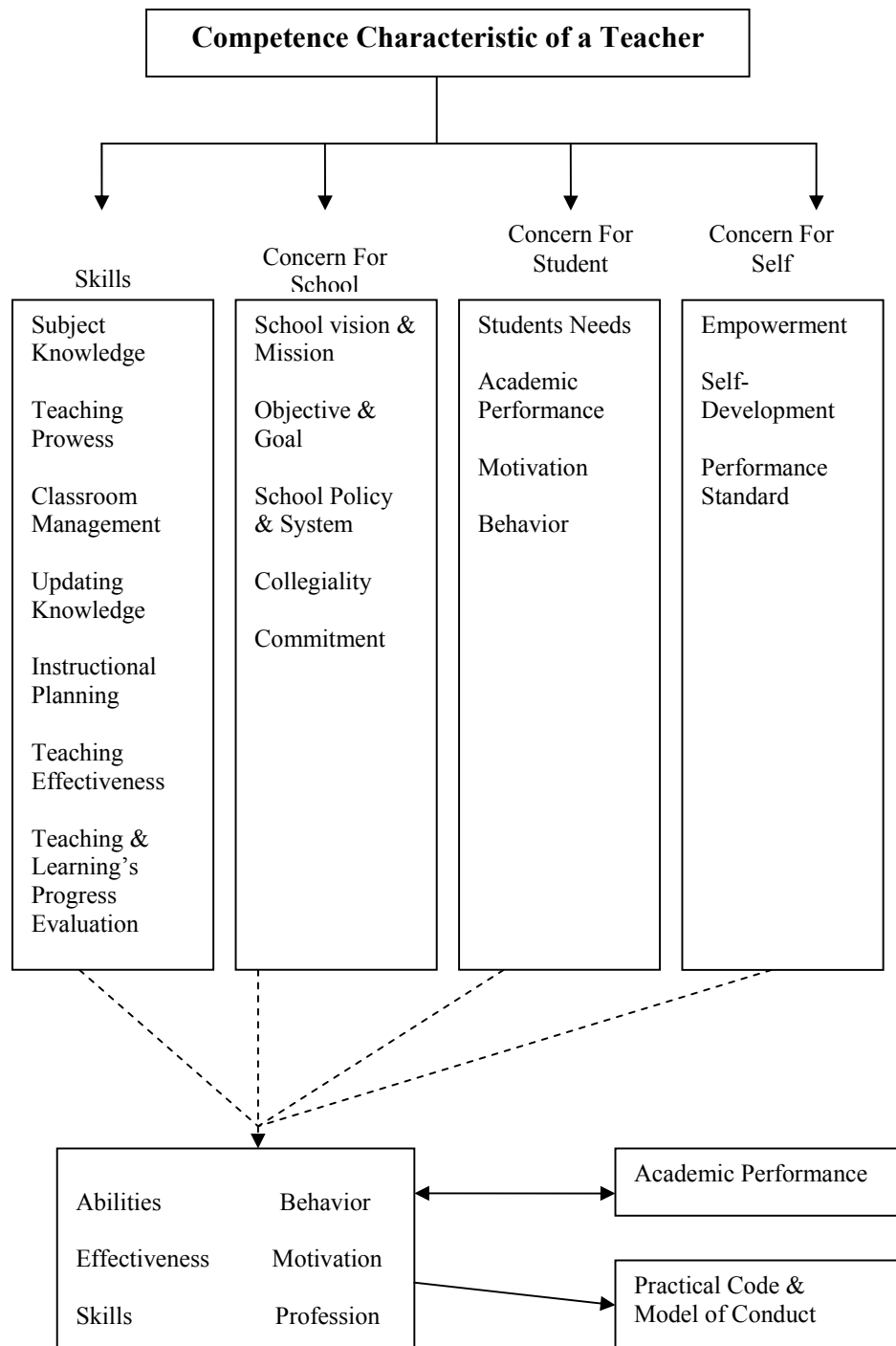
Concern for school scales have five sub-scales which testing the concerns of teachers on school vision and mission, objectives and goals, school policy and system, collegiality; and commitment.

Concern for student scales have four sub-scales which testing the concerns of teacher on students' need, academic performance, motivation and behavior.

Concern for self scales have three sub-scales which testing the concerns of teachers on his/her self development, self management and performance standard as teacher.

Four main scales are important to test on teachers' competency, which will then with objectives to finalize the most dominants abilities, behavior, effectiveness, motivation, skills and profession that will use for build a practical code or clarify the characteristics of teachers' competency; and the academic performance of respondents will be using to test the relationship with the four competence scales.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



1.8 Importance of the Study

According to Whitty and Willmott (1995), competence was perceived as task being clearly defined and the criteria of success being set out alongside this. It encompasses intellectual, cognitive and attitudinal dimensions as well as performance. Therefore, this study has important implications to most teachers as well as to the schools and educational institutions administrators.

As proposed by Page (1978), a competency test is designed to assess which particular skills have been learned. In educational context, a competency test means a test to develop for the purpose of assessing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of the students and /or teachers. Teaching competency is a set of abilities, knowledge and belief which teacher possesses and also uses for an effective teaching and learning process. In other words, competency is the possession of sufficient skills and understanding to so certain kind of works satisfactorily. Understanding the terms and concepts of competence will help teachers to develop a controllable belief of own ability, value and profession in regulating teaching and learning strategies while handling students' needs and academic task. Thus, this study can enlighten postgraduate students cum teachers to their teaching competence and skills thus enabling them to improve their weakness and foster quality competence characteristics.

Findings of this study will reveal practicing teachers who are postgraduate students. Such information can assist their schools' administrators to design the curriculum and/ or intervention programmes to enhance the level of competence as well as promoting optimal academics outcomes (e.g. The Model of Effective Teacher and Professional Characteristics of a Teacher)

Last but not least, it is hoped that through this study, the competence of teacher, characteristics, effectiveness, skills, profession and treats is highlighted thus encouraging educational researcher all over Malaysia to carry out further

refinement in this research area in getting more precise result to be generalized to different schools and higher education teaching context.

1.9 Scope and Limitations of Study

The study is focused on identified teachers' competencies that been and constantly practiced. The participants are restricted to the postgraduate students in UTM, Skudai. Therefore, the finding may not appropriate to generalize to other schools and learning institutions.

The instrument used in the study is self-report questionnaire. In order to get the effective data, respondents must be both willing and able to answer the questions. Furthermore, these types of questions may not be very good at capturing the actual events or on-going dynamic process of self-regulated strategies.

The data for competence testing of teachers just taken once for this study; respondents have to recall their strategies and skills in their previous teaching progress and their own perception of teaching competence, skills and profession. The strategies, characteristics, skills, effectiveness and profession can be identifying but the development of strategies, characteristics and skills cannot be observed.

1.10 Concept and Definition

1.10.1 Competency

According to Wojtczak (2002), competence defined in generic terms as a possession of a satisfactory level of relevant knowledge and acquisition of a range of relevant skills that include interpersonal and technical components at a certain point in the educational process. Such knowledge and skills are necessary to perform the tasks that reflect the scope of professional practices.

A review of the literature showed three main positions taken toward a definition of the term. Competencies were defined as either:

- i. Observable performance (Boam and Sparrow, 1992; Bowden and Masters, 1993);
- ii. The standard or quality of the outcome of the person's performance (Rutherford, 1995; Hager et al., 1994); or
- iii. The underlying attributes of a person (Boyatzis, 1982; Sternberg and Kolligian, 1990).

In this study, competency is means the individuals' abilities such as skills and knowledge that will result in effective and excellent working performance.

1.10.2 Teaching Competency

According to Bowden and Masters (1993), competency in education was attempted to relate the idea of work preparation and professional recognition with that of a broad education.

Teaching competency refers to cognitive knowledge of the teachers, which entails effects on student learning. Page *et al.* (1979) use the term competency-based teaching which they describe as “the movement in teacher education which aims to train students in specific classroom skills. It includes the use of teaching methods such as interaction process analysis, microteaching simulation etc.”

In this study, teaching competency are referring to ability of teacher in presenting his/her knowledge, capturing effective and efficient skills, concerns for school, students and self which means his/ her has high ability to act as a competent teacher and also as a professional in education field.

1.10.3 Competency Test

In the educational context, a competency test means a test developed for the purpose of assessing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of the students and/or teachers. According to Page *et al.* (1979), a competency test is designed to assess which particular skill has been learned.

In this study, competency test means a test that developed for the purpose of assessing the knowledge, skills, concerns, and attitude of teachers. Competency test in this study is testing from four main scales; there are skills scale, concern for school scale, concern for student scale and concern for self scale.

1.10.4 Effective Teaching

An effective teacher is one who runs an effective classroom, and touches the lives of students. An efficient teacher is one who knows what they are doing and

does the right thing consistently. To be an effective and efficient teacher, the teacher must have three very important characteristics for student success. Positive expectations, extremely good classroom management skills, and know how to design lessons for student mastery. Positive expectations are essential to student success. When the teacher has high expectations, not high standards, the students will perform to teachers' expectations.

Effective teaching in this study is described in terms below:

- i. Has good education and is able to solve problem independently
- ii. Is a very experienced teacher
- iii. Is able to understand and concern students
- iv. Know the importance of commitment and friendly relationship which will build and create a nice and energetic environment for school and student development.
- v. Know how to take the responsibility for things happening in the school
- vi. Provide a good example in his/her behaviors
- vii. Effective time and stress management

1.10.5 Profession

Cogan (1953, p. 33) defines a profession as "a vocation whose practice is founded upon an understanding of the theoretical structure of some department of learning or science, and upon the abilities accompanying such understanding". Because of the specialized knowledge and expertise they possess, members of a profession have influence and power over those for whom they provide service. The education profession serves complex goods that are concerned with the development of the student and the future of the society. An educator ought to possess certain characteristics so that he/she is professional in his/her occupation.

1.10.6 Subject knowledge

The educator's expertise in respective discipline which is hard earned, thorough in content, extensive enough to assess and that is exhibited with confidence to supplement students in their core skills of the subjects.

1.10.7 Teaching Prowess

The ability of the educator to employ appropriate pedagogy, effective communication skills, and demonstrate classroom management skills competent enough to sustain his/her credibility.

1.10.8 Updating Knowledge

It describes his/her aspiration for updating his/her knowledge and improving the process of teaching through professional training, research and action research.

1.10.9 Collegiality

The sense of oneness with peers that enhance consensus rather than competition that results in developing and gaining professional skills and institution effectiveness through shared ideas, goals and practice.

1.10.10 Commitment

The educator's personal and professional investment of time and space with dedication to his profession that entails his/her work, institution, colleagues, students and the community.

1.10.11 Teacher student relationship

The educator enrich his/her bond with the students through his/her interpersonal skills and developing a sense of responsibility, confidence and self discipline that enables them to interact freely and effectively in groups and also feel a sense of fair treatment and being attended with care and respect.

1.10.12 Empowerment

The capacity of the educator to engross information and execute autonomy with discretion and control in decision making.

1.10.13 Self-development

The responsibility that the educator possess toward him/herself in achieving job satisfaction, managing time structure, meeting his career aspirations and enriching his leadership qualities for professional growth.

1.10.14 Remuneration

The indisputable characteristic which rewards the complexity of the knowledge, skills and capabilities expressed by the educator that motivates and retains the talented individuals.

1.10.15 Ethical Code of Conduct

Standards of action, flexible enough to practice appropriately for a situation, in guiding a vibrant profession.

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